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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MAPUTO 000049

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SUBJECT: RENAMO PARTY LEADER DHLAKAMA ASSESSES ELECTION RESULTS

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Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Todd Chapman for reasons 1.4 (b+d)

11. (C) SUMMARY: The Charge met with traditional opposition party RENAMO President Afonso Dhlakama recently to get a readout on his views of the October 28 elections and future plans following RENAMO's biggest-ever electoral loss. Dhlakama confirmed that his party will not take up arms as rumored, but remains concerned that Mozambique is slipping towards a Zimbabwean model of single-party rule. Dhlakama noted several examples of elections malfeasance without providing substantive proof. Turning to the future of RENAMO, Dhlakama stated that his party will remain a national fixture and attempt to revise the election law. Contrary to what most political observers believe, Dhlakama asserted that FRELIMO continues to control President Guebuza, and in turn the organs of the state continue to control FRELIMO. (Note: Most insiders believe that Guebuza increasingly controls the decision making of FRELIMO which in turn has complete control over the state. End Note) Commenting on Daviz Simango's MDM party, Dhlakama discounted its influence on the national level, describing it as a movement rather than a party, and opining that Simango may return to RENAMO. Simango denies that he will ever return to RENAMO. Dhlakama's analysis of his party's worst loss yet in the National Assembly (AR) and his views of the political scene in Mozambique confirm that he is increasingly out of touch and a significant reason why multi-party democracy is withering in Mozambique. END SUMMARY.

RENAMO WILL NOT TAKE UP ARMS AGAIN

12. (C) In a recent meeting with traditional opposition RENAMO party President Afonso Dhlakama in Nampula, the Charge discussed the electoral process, current developments within the party, the political environment, and RENAMO's political future. Dhlakama began by repeating several times that, despite an unfair and tainted election, RENAMO had no intention to take up arms and return to violence as was rumored in the press, stating that such plans would undermine political and civil stability. Dhlakama explained that RENAMO's objective was to assure that Mozambique remains a multi-party democracy and avoids becoming the next Zimbabwe. He said that RENAMO could not sit by and watch the progress since 1992 towards multi-party democracy be erased, and would demonstrate in peaceful ways against the increasing dominance of FRELIMO. Paradoxically, Dhlakama called on RENAMO Members of Parliament not to take their parliamentary seats in protest of the election. (Note: Such a move would only increase the 75 percent majority FRELIMO already enjoys, increasing FRELIMO's already strong grip on legislative power. Most RENAMO parliamentarians are likely to take their seats eventually, as a National Assembly (AR) position comes

with a salary in excess of \$30,000, a luxury automobile, housing allowance, and other benefits. Also, for each vacant seat RENAMO would stand to lose nearly \$2,000 in separate fees per parliamentarian paid directly to the party by the state. End Note)

ELECTIONS MALFEASANCE HARD TO PROVE

13. (C) Dhlakama questioned whether the United States could be satisfied with and accept the results of the recent national election. The Charge responded that USG concerns about the electoral process were well known and well publicized. Looking back on the October 28 results in which RENAMO lost an unprecedented 31 seats in the AR giving more than enough seats for a FRELIMO super-majority, Dhlakama provided several unsubstantiated examples of widespread election fraud. He explained that election fraud was difficult to substantiate because potential whistle-blowers fear for their safety, and that the press realizes it is not free to discuss such sensitive topics. He asserted that in the 12,000 voting stations country-wide all poll workers were FRELIMO members, each under instruction to ensure a minimum of 10 votes in favor of FRELIMO from family, friends, and colleagues. This alone ensured 840,000 votes for FRELIMO, according to Dhlakama, but does not necessarily constitute fraud. The RENAMO President also complained that when his election monitors raised concerns about electoral malfeasance at the polls on Election Day the police arrested them.

DHLAKAMA: RENAMO NOT THE NEXT UNITA

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14. (C) Turning to RENAMO's plans, Dhlakama indicated that his party will push for a review of the election law which many observers believe unfairly biases the electoral playing field towards FRELIMO. Unprompted, Dhlakama stated that unlike Angola's UNITA, RENAMO will continue to have a role in national politics. Dhlakama said that he decided to move party headquarters to Nampula in order to be closer to his constituency and to be a part of the rapid growth taking place in the center of the country. Despite statements to the press in the course of the campaign saying he would not run for president again if his party did not win, Dhlakama said he plans to continue his long tenure at the helm of the party and would indeed again campaign for the presidency.

UNUSUAL VIEWS ON FRELIMO AND THE STATE

15. (C) Dhlakama described his unique perspective on the ruling party by asserting that FRELIMO continues to lead Guebuza, while in contrast he leads RENAMO. Dhlakama also opined that the state apparatus controls FRELIMO, rather than the reverse, and that if FRELIMO were to fall out of power, the party would break apart quickly. (Note: Contrary to Dhlakama's view, most political observers believe that over the past 5 years Guebuza has consolidated his power within the ruling party and now dominates its decisions. Also, FRELIMO party leadership has confirmed that it in fact wields ultimate policy authority over the state, and therefore all branches of government are controlled by FRELIMO. End Note)

DHLAKAMA: MDM WILL NOT SUCCEED

16. (C) When prompted about his views on the new opposition Democratic Movement of Mozambique (MDM) party led by RENAMO breakaway member Daviz Simango, which gained 8 seats in AR, Dhlakama dismissed MDM as a movement rather than a party, with little organization. Dhlakama said he thinks Simango will not make it as an independent candidate, and may return

to RENAMO. (Note: In a January 7 interview in independent O Pais, Daviz Simango unequivocally states that he will not return to RENAMO. End Note) Dhlakama believed that FRELIMO attempted to hype MDM in an effort to weaken RENAMO prior to the elections, however election results clearly show that RENAMO is still the leading opposition party. (Note: All indications suggest that FRELIMO was taken off guard by popular support for MDM and engaged in electioneering by disqualifying large numbers of MDM's AR candidates in order to limit the party's success in the national elections. End Note) Dhlakama flatly denied any rumors of collusion between FRELIMO and RENAMO to keep MDM out of power.

COMMENT: DHLAKAMA PART OF THE PROBLEM

17. (C) Dhlakama's performance in the run-up to the national elections proves that he continues to be a charming campaigner, but little else (reftel). Despite Dhlakama's espoused concerns about multi-party democracy, by staying at the helm of his party he continues to ensure that RENAMO remains weak with minimal impact on national politics. Daviz Simango is just the most recent in a long line of RENAMO members pushed out of the party by an increasingly jealous and out of touch Dhlakama who was long-ago co-opted by FRELIMO. One rumor circulating is the possibility of RENAMO deputies in the AR defecting to MDM, thus reducing RENAMO's presence in the AR. Dhlakama seems oblivious to the astonishing defeat that his party suffered in the October 28 elections, and his analysis of FRELIMO and its relationship to organs of the state is simply upside down. Post believes that if FRELIMO had not stepped in prior to the elections to disqualify large numbers of MDM candidates for the AR, Daviz Simango's party would have surpassed RENAMO on the national level to become the new leader of the opposition.
CHAPMAN